8th February 2016

1973 Football

Row 1: Coach Ayres, M. Hall, T. Aberle, R. Doran, R. Friedman, R. Cole, B. Nussbaum, P. Kelson. Row 2: Coach Johnson, S. Goslin, J. Pick, J. Kilgus, D. Maley, J. Oprondek, R. Rothenberger, K. Hoffman. Row 3: Coach Jeffries, J. Ulfers, M. Kelson, C. Friant, D. Roth, T. Davis, F. McPherson, D. Lawrence, J. VanNote, M. White. Row 4: Coach Beyer, R. Ricketts, S. Metz, M. Wenger, A. Whately, M. Wharton, S. Crews, A. Knapp, J. Tribley. Row 5: Mr. Kilgus, C. Lindsay, D. Mowry, M. Erdman, R. Vedder, M. Whately, H. Brogan, J. Wilburn, D. Kaisner, Mr. Joda, J. Stiver, T. Rothenberger.

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1973 Fairbury-Cropsey Tartars

INTRODUCTION

Fairbury-Cropsey's football coach, John Feely, resigned during the summer of 1973 to accept the post as line coach at Morton High School and there was little reason for optimism as summer fun was ending and football season was starting in August. Three years earlier, Feely led the Tartars to the first perfect campaign in 20 years. The next two seasons produced few victories, in a large part because of an inordinate number of injuries. With a new coach and just 22 boys reporting for equipment, some said, "This (1973) team will not win a single game. It is absolutely hopeless."

The lack of numbers was in part due to the departure of three gifted athletes. The first blow was when Rodney and Neal Bazzell transferred to Olympia High School as their father's work moved the family to Stanford. Members of the Bazzell family played on virtually every great Tartar team for the past 20-or-so years and Neal and Rodney were both excellent players (their brother Steve was an outstanding lineman on the undefeated 1970 squad). The Green and Gold also lost Greg Williams, a gifted multi-sport athlete, when his family moved to the Paxton area. In addition, Ted Turner, another lad counted on for the season, moved to Bloomington.

Fairbury-Cropsey's newly hired principal, John Isaacs, faced a tough challenge finding a new coach late in the summer but he found the mentor the FCHS athletes needed - John Ayers. Ayers, a native of the Chicago area and graduate of Proviso West High, attended Nebraska Wesleyan where he was a three-year letterman in football and a two-year letterman in baseball. He coached for five years at Blue Hill, Neb. prior to becoming the defensive line coordinator and secondary linebackers coach at Eastern Montana College in Billings. Ayers had all he wanted of the West and welcomed the opportunity to move his family to Illinois.

Getting a late start, Coach Ayers immediately got busy building his team, with the first challenge being attracting more boys to become part of the varsity squad. He said, "There is no job too big to tackle if we can find boys who love contact and are not afraid of hard work." Ultimately, the new coach attracted 63 athletes to play for the Green and Gold, with over one-third of the lads being freshmen. Ayers met individually with most members of the team prior to the first practice. As the squad progressed through early practices, Ayers predicted, "If we avoid injuries, we could have a respectable season."

Success, according to the new coach, depended on how well five players adjusted to playing both ways. Ayers emphasized the importance of guards Rick Cole and Mark Hall, tackle Rick Rothenberger, running back and linebacker Mike Kelson, and defensive back and running back Jeff Kilgus serving as two-way players.

Although the Tartars returned 21 lettermen, many had little playing experience and competition for starting spots was intense. Prior to the first game, junior Steve Crews had an edge in the battle with sophomore Dave Roth for the quarterback position. In addition to Kelson and Kilgus, Randy Ricketts, Dale Maley, and Mike Wenger showed promise in the backfield. Scott Goslin and Joe Opronek competed for the starting split end position while Randy Friedman, Paul Kelson, and John Ulfers showed promise at tight end. Rothenberger and Tony Aberle were the top tackle

candidates with Jim Tribley and Tom Askew likely to see plenty of action. Hall, Cole, and Alvin Knapp were the top guard prospects and Art Whately had the center spot wrapped up.

Top returning linemen included co-captains Hall (185 pounds, a two-year letterman, and honorable mention on the Sangamon Valley Conference all-star team as fullback) and Rothenberger (200 pound tackle). Aberle (215 pounds) returned as a two-year letterman and Whately, Askew, Cole, Knapp, Ken Hoffman, and Mark Erdman also lettered in 1972.

The backfield returned several lettermen. The quarterback returnees were Crews (a junior) and Roth (a sophomore). Running back Kelson (160) appeared to be ready for an excellent year. Maley, a senior and a two-year letterman, was also competing for a starting job. Wenger, Randy Doran, Randy Ricketts, and Ray Popejoy also lettered in the backfield in 1972. Ayers felt that Kilgus, a defensive back, and linebacker Kelson were is his most outstanding defensive players.

Mainstays on the receiving corps included Friedman, Paul Kelson, Goslin, and Ulfers.

Bob Nussbaum, Steve Metz, Jerry Pick, and Mitch Wharton rounded out the varsity roster and were expected to see varsity playing time in reserve roles.

Ayers was assisted by long-time Tartar coaches Dave Jeffries and Jerry Byer. Ken Johnson also had a year of assistant coaching experience at FCHS.

As practices ended and games approached, based on film from the previous season, Ayers and his staff predicted that Argenta-Oreana, Mahomet-Seymour, and Farmer City Mansfield would be the teams to beat in the Sangamon Valley Conference. The Tartars' first test would be the Argenta-Oreana Bombers.

SEASON RESULTS

STAR TARTAR — Tartar halfback Jeff Kilgus (33) is brought down after a short gain by an Argenta defender. Kilgus carried the ball 14 times for a total of 114 yards. — (Leader Photo by G. Holaway.)

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Fairbury-Cropsey – 18, Argenta-Oreana – 0

Prior to the Argenta-Oreana game, Coach John Ayers said his team featured “a particularly quick defense.” His confidence in his defenders proved to be accurate as Fairbury-Cropsey defeated Argenta-Oreana, 18-0.

Ayres sounded a note of caution after the Tartars’ surprising win over highly regarded Argenta-Oreana (the pre-season co-favorite to win Sangamon Valley title). “I think we looked pretty good. The only real surprise about the victory was that we didn’t know if our players would realize their potential this early. But, don’t get me wrong. We’re not getting overexcited. We think probably that Argenta was overrated.”

Although cautious with his praise, Ayers was pleased with quickness of the line. Fairbury-Cropsey yielded just 129 yards to visitors while gaining 242 yards (all but 25 on the ground). In addition, his gridders were assessed zero penalty yards.

Senior Jeff Kilgus scored the Tartars’ first TD of the season with a 28-yard off-tackle run. The drive started when Mark Hall recovered an Argenta fumble on the opponent's 23-yard line. An illegal procedure penalty moved the ball back five yards. On the next play, Kilgus sprinted to paydirt. The 2-point conversion attempt failed.

Co-captain Hall’s tackle on the ensuing kick-off jarred the ball loose from the Bombers’ star running back, Scott Doane. The Green and Gold recovered the loose ball on Argenta’s 19. Three plays later, sophomore quarterback Steve Crews connected with Scott Goslin for a 14-yard gain. Kilgus completed the drive with a five-yard dive through the line. Again, the two-point conversion attempt failed.

Mike Kelson tallied the Tartars’ final six points with a one-yard plunge in the fourth quarter. His TD was set up by Crews’ 44-yard sprint around end.

Plenty of running backs touched the football as the hosts recorded 12 first downs while limiting the guests to just five. Kilgus led the offense with 103 yards on 13 carries (7.9 average). Crews contributed 64 yards on 12 attempts (5.3 average). Kelson registered 34 yards on 12 carries (2.8 average) and Mike Wenger rushed 11 yards on two chances. Dale Maley added 4 yards on one carry while Randy Doran rounded out the ground game with two runs totaling one yard.

Crews completed two of nine passes for 25 yards (14 yards to Goslin and 11 yards to Kilgus). His numbers were misleading because five accurate passes were dropped.

The contest did include a fair number of miscues; the Tartars fumbled twice and recovered one. Argenta fumbled five times and lost all of them. Tartar Rick Cole recovered two fumbles.

Ayres cited ends Randy Friedman and John Ulfers, tackles Tony Aberle and Steve Metz, guards Hall and Rick Cole, center Art Whately and split end Goslin for outstanding blocking for the backfield.

Hall led the team with 42 defensive points and caused three Bomber fumbles. Ayers noted excellent defensive play by sophomore end Alvin Knapp and senior tackle Aberle.

The Tartars' kicking game was respectable for a first contest of the year. Cole kicked off four times, averaging 32 yards per kick. Randy Friedman punted three times for a total of 99 yards. Tim Davis, on a quick kick, got 33 yards for Fairbury.

The Tartars played without the services of Co-captain Rick Rothenberger who injured his neck in practice and Randy Ricketts (broken thumb).

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Argenta-Oreana	0	0	0	0	0
Fairbury-Cropsey	0	12	6	0	18

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Coach John Ayers and junior running back Mike Kelson talk on the sideline. Kelson's scored the Tartars' only touchdown in a hard fought battle with Leroy. Crier Photo

Fairbury-Cropsey – 8, Leroy – 7

The powerful Tartar defense was of critical importance in an 8-7 win over guest Leroy. Two times in the first half the Green and Gold shut down Panther scoring opportunities; Leroy's kicker missed a 37-yard field goal and Alvin Knapp recovered a Panther fumble 28 yards from the end zone.

The Tartars only scoring threat before intermission ended on the last play of the half when Kevin Schultz intercepted a pass intended for Dale Maley.

Leroy's defense registered the Panthers' only touchdown of the game. Tackle Rod Mosier hit Tartar QB Steve Crews as he dropped back to pass, causing a fumble. As the ball bounced toward the Tartar goal line, Mosier scooped it up and ran 17 yards for six points. The PAT kick was good.

Trailing 7-0 in the fourth quarter, Fairbury-Cropsey's Mike Kelson intercepted Kevin Shultz's pass and returned the ball to the Panther seven. Three plays later, Kelson crashed through the line, reducing the gap to 7-6. Electing to play for the win rather than settle for a tie, Coach Ayres chose the two-point conversion rather than a one-point kick. His gamble was a good one as Crews ran a quarterback sweep, scoring two points and improving the team's record to 2-0.

The Tartars were limited to a total of 76 yards (46 on the ground and 30 in the air). Kelson picked up 28 yards on twelve carries while Jeff Kilgus was limited to 20 yards on 8 attempts. Maley's number was called twice, netting 8 yards. Don Kaiser ran once for five yards. Crews netted -15 yards on nine plays as a result of multiple sacks and scrambles. Crews connected on three of nine passes (Randy Friedman – 16 yards, Maley – 11 yards, Kilgus – 3 yards).

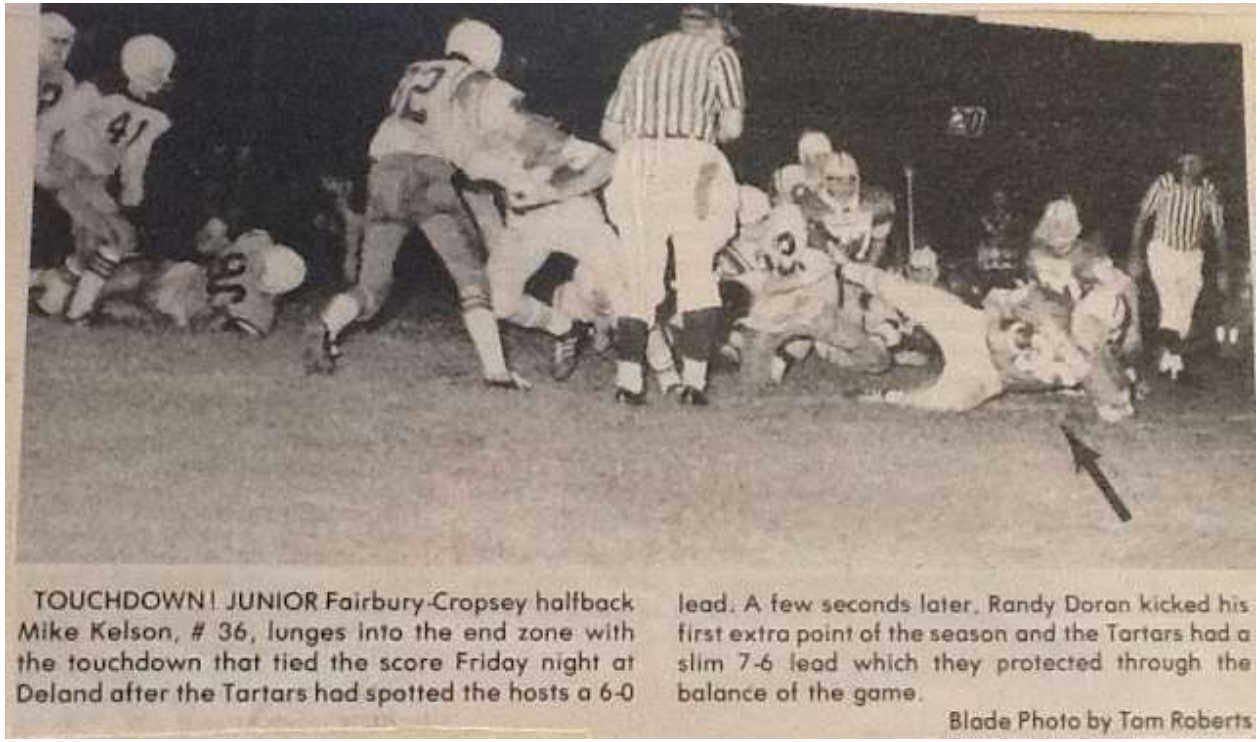
Leroy advanced the chains eight times while limiting the Tartars to just four first downs.

Two games into the season, the Tartar defense had not given up a single gain of over 15 yards.

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Leroy	0	0	7	0	7
Fairbury-Cropsey	0	0	0	8	8

Scoring:
Leroy: Touchdown – Mosier (17-yard run after fumble recovery). PAT - Schultz (kick).
Fairbury-Cropsey: Touchdown – Kelson (2-yard run). PAT – Crews (run).



TOUCHDOWN! JUNIOR Fairbury-Cropsey halfback Mike Kelson, # 36, lunges into the end zone with the touchdown that tied the score Friday night at Deland after the Tartars had spotted the hosts a 6-0 lead. A few seconds later, Randy Doran kicked his first extra point of the season and the Tartars had a slim 7-6 lead which they protected through the balance of the game.

Blade Photo by Tom Roberts

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Fairbury-Cropsey – 7, Deland-Weldon – 6

Deland finished the 1972 season 0-9. That did not discourage athletes from playing in ’73 with nearly half of male enrollment trying out for team and 14 lettermen returning for first year coach John Lenz

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The Tartars played without the services of Jeff Kilgus; he was hospitalized with the flu. In the Tartars’ first two games, Kilgus gained 123 yards on 21 yards, averaging 5.9 yards per carry and scoring two TDs.

The opponents’ only score was a setup by a 54-yard pass to the two-yard line followed by a two-yard blast through center by Steve Twist. Coach Lenz opted to kick for the PAT, but his players took too much time to execute the play, forcing him attempt a two-point conversion. The Tartars’ sophomore defensive back Dave Roth wrestled the ball away from Deland-Weldon’s receiver, breaking up the attempt for an 8-0 lead.

The Tartars’ scoring drive started with a fumble recovery on the Deland-Weldon’s 30-yard line. The distance to the goal line was halved when Steve Crews connected with Scott Goslin. On first-and-ten, Don Kaisner, filling in for Kilgus, picked up nine

yards, advancing the ball to the six. Two plays later, Mike Kelson skirted by defenders, knotting the score at six-all. Randy Doran's PAT kick was from the 7 ½ yard-line because of a five yard delay of game penalty.

Kelson amassed 85 yards on 11 carries. Dale Maley carried the ball 7 times, gaining 25 yards. Sophomore Kaisner added 17 yards on 11 carries. Crews ran 11 times and had a net loss of one yard.

Goslin hauled in one pass for 14 yards. Randy Friedman caught one toss, gaining 11 yards. Maley received one pass for two yards and Kaisner's only reception failed to advance the ball.

The Green and Gold recovered all four of the game's fumbles; Mark Hall hauled in two, Tony Aberle and Crews gathered one apiece.

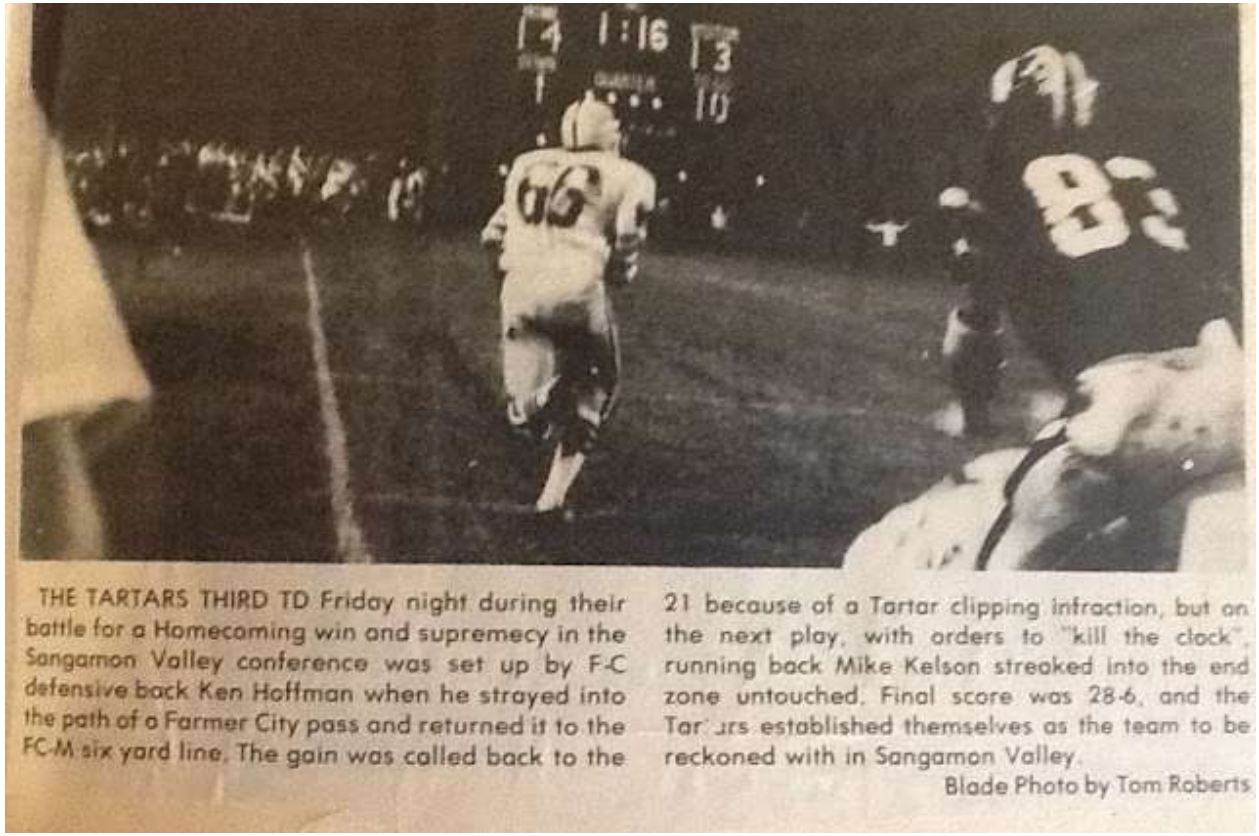
The victory moved FC into a first-place tie with Farmer City, 3-0.

Maley recalls several members of the team stopping by Fairbury Hospital to celebrate the hard-fought victory with Kilgus. Because it was after visiting hours, the jubilant Tartars pounded on the senior Tartar's window until he awakened and opened the window to learn about the victory over Leroy.

Statistics:	Fairbury-Cropsey	Deland-Weldon
Total Yards	153	133
Rushing:	126	78
Passing:	27	55
Passes Attempted:	11	11
Passes Completed:	4	2
First Downs:	10	9
Fumbles:	1	3
Fumbles Recovered:	4	0
Penalties:	170 yards	95 yards

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	0	0	7	0	7
Deland-Weldon	0	6	0	0	6

Scoring Summary:
Fairbury-Cropsey: Touchdown – Kelson (6 yd. run). Point after touchdown – Cole (Kick).
Deland-Weldon: Touchdown – Twist (1 yd. run).



THE TARTARS THIRD TD Friday night during their battle for a Homecoming win and supremecy in the Sangamon Valley conference was set up by F-C defensive back Ken Hoffman when he strayed into the path of a Farmer City pass and returned it to the FC-M six yard line. The gain was called back to the 21 because of a Tartar clipping infraction, but on the next play, with orders to "kill the clock", running back Mike Kelson streaked into the end zone untouched. Final score was 28-6, and the Tartars established themselves as the team to be reckoned with in Sangamon Valley.

Blade Photo by Tom Roberts

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Fairbury-Cropsey – 28, Farmer City-Mansfield - 13

Sangamon Valley Conference Standings Prior to the Farmer City-Mansfield Game				
	W	L	T	Pct.
Fairbury-Cropsey	3	0	0	1.000
Farmer City-Mansfield	3	0	0	1.000
Mahomet-Seymour	2	1	0	.666
Fischer	1	1	1	.500
Leroy	1	1	1	.500
Heyworth	1	1	0	.500

Argenta	0	2	0	.000
Octavia	0	2	0	.000
Deland-Weldon	0	3	0	.000

Farmer City-Mansfield entered the contest with Fairbury-Cropsey with excellent credentials; FCMHS won the conference title in in 1972 and returned 11 lettermen. In the previous four seasons, the Sangamon Valley powerhouse had compiled a 26-7-3 record. But, previous seasons had no impact on the 1973 game. The Tartars took a huge step in securing the Sangamon Valley Conference football championship by stomping their guests, 28-13 in front of a large Homecoming crowd. It was an extremely physical contest with several players taken from the field by ambulance.

The visitors' Kenny Rittenhouse reached the end zone first with 8:26 left in the first quarter. One of the conference's premier running backs, Rittenhouse dashed 19 yards through the Tartar defense for six points. The extra point kick was wide.

Less than four minutes after the first FCM TD, the Tartars negated their guests' lead. Tony Aberle smothered a Farmer City fumble on the visitors' 33. The Tartars' ensuing drive ended with Jeff Kilgus' eight-yard run, tying the score at six. The extra point kick was no good.

Shortly before intermission, Rittenhouse again plunged across the goal line. This time, the PAT kick was good and the Tartars trailed by seven points with two quarters remaining.

The third quarter looked featured hard-hitting defense by both clubs – neither team was able to assemble a scoring drive.

FCHS switched from primarily a ground attack to an aerial show in the final stanza. The first connection was a ten-yard pass from junior signal caller Steve Crews to Jim Huber. Rittenhouse, who was defending the play, was seriously injured and taken to Peoria St. Francis Hospital. After a long delay, the Tartars advanced the ball to the Blue Devil 30. On the next play, it appeared a dash by Kilgus had moved the Tartars within one point of the guests, but a penalty moved the ball back to the 35 and the drive stalled.

The Tartars' second score was set up when Mark Hall scooped up a Blue Devil fumble and returned it to Farmer City's 29. Two plays later, Kilgus broke through the line and sprinted 20 yards to paydirt. Coach John Ayers elected to go for a win rather than kick for the PAT. Crews' quarterback keeper gave his team a 14-13 lead.

With the clock winding down, Alan Bright went to the air on his team's 26. Kenny Hoffman read the play perfectly, picking off the pass and returning it to the Blue Devil's six. A clipping call on the return moved the ball back to the 21. Kelson ran a dive play through the line and scored on the next play. Randy Doran's kick was good and FCHS led 21-13.

With 66 seconds remaining in the contest, Doran intercepted a pass, returning it for a touchdown. Doran's kick completed the scoring, securing a 28-13 homecoming victory.

Kilgus compiled 111 yards on 17 carries. Kelson accumulated 39 yards on 14 attempts. Dale Maley carried one time and picked up three yards. Crews netted negative nine yards on six carries.

Crews was very accurate on ten passes, completing seven for 89 yards. Huber caught three passes for 33 yards. Randy Friedman pulled in one pass for 18 yards. Scott Goslin, Joe Oprondek, and Kilgus each caught one pass.

The enthusiasm of the victory was greatly reduced when it was learned FCHS freshman Bill Goad fell head first from a homecoming float he was helping disassemble. His injury was of the same type suffered by Farmer City's Rittenhouse, leaving both partially paralyzed. Sadly, Rittenhouse survived just a few weeks before succumbing to the injuries.

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Farmer City-Mansfield	6	7	0	0	13
Fairbury-Cropsey	6	0	0	22	28

Scoring:
Farmer City-Mansfield: Touchdowns – Rittenhouse 2 (20 and two yard runs). PAT: Gammage (kick).
Fairbury-Cropsey: Touchdowns: Kilgus 2 (8 and 20 yard runs); Kelson (20 yard run); Doran (24 yard run on pass interception). PAT – Crews (run); Doran 2 (kicks).

Fairbury-Cropsey – 8, Heyworth – 38

Sangamon Valley Conference Standings
Prior to the Heyworth Game

	W	L	T	Pct.
Fairbury-Cropsey	4	0	0	1.000
Farmer City-Mansfield	3	1	0	1.000
Heyworth	2	1	0	.667
Mahomet-Seymour	2	1	0	.667
Leroy	2	1	1	.667
Argenta	1	2	0	.333
Fischer	1	2	1	.333
Octavia	0	3	0	.000
Deland-Weldon	0	4	0	.000

Host Heyworth dominated FCHS, ending the Tartars' hopes of a perfect season. The Hornets improved to a 4-1 record and 3-1 in the league. Fairbury-Cropsey fell to 4-1 for the season and in the conference.

The Hornets' Brett Wickenhauser inflicted much of the damage. It appeared the Green and Gold would once again overshadow an opponent as quarterback Steve Crews and his offence marched with ease from FC's 20-yard line to Heyworth's

40 but the drive ended when Wickenhauser intercepted a pass and returned the ball 40 yards to the Green and Gold 15. Two plays later, he crashed through the line for the first score of the contest. The two-point conversion was successful, giving the hosts an 8-0 advantage at the end of the first stanza.

Fairbury-Cropsey was forced to punt early in the second quarter, starting a Hornet drive on its own 25. After giving up a couple of big plays, the Tartar defense stopped the Heyworth offense on three plays and Heyworth faced fourth and one foot. Quarterback Mike Waldon was up to the challenge; he ran through the middle of the line to the guests' two-yard line. Again, the Tartar defense met the challenge, pushing the opponent back to the 15 on two plays. Heyworth's drive ended with linebacker Randy Ricketts intercepting a pass

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Fairbury-Cropsey was unable to gain a first down and punted to the Heyworth 42. The Hornets proceeded to march to the Tartars' end zone, with Wickenhauser gaining 36 of the 42 yards on two rushes. The Tartars stopped the two-point conversion attempt and trailed 14-0 at intermission.

Early in the second half, it appeared momentum had shifted to the visiting Tartars. Junior Mike Kelson smothered a Hornet fumble on the hosts' 36. It appeared FCHS closed the gap to 14-6 as Crews connected with Dale Maley on cross pattern, but officials flagged Maley for a motion offense. The drive stalled and the Tartars were again forced to punt.

Disappointment from the flagged TD was erased a few plays later when Tony Aberle crashed through the Hornets' line, rocked Walden and forced a fumble in the Tartars' end zone. Mark Hall scooped up the ball for a Tartar TD. Crews connected with Jeff Kilgus for a two-point conversion, closing the gap to 14-8.

The remained of the game was dominated by Heyworth, outscoring the Tartars 24-0.

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	0	0	8	0	8
Heyworth	8	6	8	16	38

Scoring Summary:
Fairbury-Cropsey - Touchdown: Hall (6 yd. run after recovering Heyworth fumble). Point-After-Touchdown: Kilgus (run).
Heyworth:
Touchdowns: Wickenhauser – 3 (4 yd. run, 10 yd. run, and 6 yd. run); Martin (8 yd. run); Walden (10 yd. run). PAT: Martin (run); Forrest (run); Walden – 2 (run)

Fairbury-Cropsey – 36, ABL – 0

A week after a disappointing loss to Heyworth, the Tartars traveled to Longview to rout host ABL, 36-0. Four of quarterback Steve Crews' completions resulted in touchdowns and Randy Ricketts reached paydirt with a 23-yard sprint.

The Green and Gold earned 15 points in the first half. In the first quarter, Crews connected with end Jim Huber for a 42-yard score. Randy Doran spilt the uprights for the PAT. FCHS upped the lead to 15-0 in the second period as a Crews pass found

Jeff Kilgus, resulting in a 12-yard score. Crews again hit Huber with a two-point conversion pass.

Crews continued to pick apart the ABL defense following intermission. Scott Goslin pulled down a pass for 41 yards and six points. Doran again drilled a PAT kick, upping the Tartars' lead to 22-0. The visiting Tartars added 13 points in the final stanza. Randy Friedman was Crews' fourth quarter target for a one-yard TD. The Tartars' back-up QB, Dave Roth, passed to Don Kaisner for the two-point conversion. Later in the period, Ricketts scored the final touchdown. The PAT kick failed, ending the scoring at 36-0.

Mark Hall was a defensive standout for the Green and Gold, recovering two ABL fumbles.

Coach John Ayers was able to substitute freely after the regulars opened a large lead. Crews was tremendous at quarterback, connecting on ten of 13 passes for 155 yards. Sophomore Roth threw one pass for a three-yard gain. Goslin was the top receiver with 87 yards on four catches. Huber pulled down three passes for 55 yard. Kilgus caught one toss for 12 yards. Friedman rounded out the receiving corps with one catch for one yard. Mike Kelson was the leading rusher, compiling 46 yards on 10 carries. Dale Maley sprinted 31 yards on just two rushes. Ricketts rushed two times, collecting 28 yards. Kilgus compiled 20 yards on 11 attempts. Crews carried the ball four times, gaining nine yards. Don Kaisner rushed nine yards on three tries. Roth recorded three yards on two carries. Mike Wenger did not gain ground on his one attempt.

The Fairbury Rotary Club hosted Coach Ayers the Tuesday after the ABL contest. At the meeting, he told his hosts that this team's success was "the result of confidence, courage, and teamwork." He cited one play in particular in the ABL game as an example of the cohesiveness of his squad. Dale Maley had not yet scored a touchdown and a pass play was called with the intention of earning him his first six-pointer of the season. The pass intended for Maley was deflected into the hands of Randy Friedman and the Tartar end fell into the end zone for six points. The game film showed Maley was the first guy with his hands in the air to indicate a TD and to celebrate his teammate's score. Ayers said his starting back was not disappointed that he did not get the glory, but instead was excited that his team had scored.

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	7	8	8	13	36
ABL	0	0	0	0	0

Scoring: Fairbury-Cropsey - Touchdowns: Huber (42-yd. pass from Crews); Kilgus (12-yd. pass from Crews); Goslin (41-yd. pass from Crews); Friedman (1-yd. pass from Crews); Ricketts (23-yd. run). PAT – Huber 2 (pass from Crews); Doran 2 (Kicks); Kaisner 2 (pass from Roth).

Fairbury-Cropsey – 28, Octavia – 6

Octavia's coach Warren Cooper had just five losing seasons in his first 19 campaigns at the Colfax school and two them were in the previous two years. There was optimism in Colfax that the Rockets would return to winning more often than losing with 12 returning lettermen from 3-4-2 1972 season. Instead, 1973 brought another losing season and Colfax entered the contest with Fairbury-Cropsey with a winless conference record.

Fairbury-Cropsey extended the hosts' hard times, downing the Rockets for the first time since the Green and Gold's perfect 1970 season. The visiting Tartars' record improved to 6-1 and 5-1 in Sangamon Valley Conference contests.

The Tartars dominated the first half, outscoring the Rockets, 15-0. FCHS jumped to an early 7-0 lead on Mike Kelson's three-yard run followed by Randy Doran's PAT kick. An Octavia fumble recovered by Rick Cole triggered the team's second scoring drive. The 80-yard drive featured the Tartars' talented running backs. Jeff Kilgus collected 25 yards on four carries, Kelson added 17 yards, Dale Maley amassed 15 yards (including a five-yard touchdown) on three tries, and quarterback Steve Crews sprinted twice for 13 yards. The drive included one pass from Crews to Jim Huber for ten yards. Crews also connected with Huber for the two-point conversion.

Maley gave the Tartars excellent field position in the third stanza, returning Octavia's kick 30 yards to the Tartars' 45. The ensuing scoring drive ended on a four-yard Kelson run. The PAT attempt was unsuccessful.

The Tartars scored the final points of the game late in the final stanza. The 51-yard drive started with three consecutive carries by Kilgus for 26 yards. The drive finished with a Crews-to-Scott Goslin 12-yard score and a Randy Doran PAT kick.

Octavia's lone score was a four-yard pass from Gary Wilke to Mike Warren. The PAT pass attempt was knocked down by Goslin.

The Tartars again played outstanding defense and forced turnovers. In addition to Cole's fumble recovery, Kelson intercepted a pitchout and returned it 63 yards. Rick Rothenberger also recovered an Octavia fumble.

Kilgus surpassed the century mark, rushing 106 yards on 18 attempts. Maley had a good game, Maley rushing 9 times for 69 yards. Kelson ran 16 times, gaining 61 yards. Crews picked up seven yards on six tries. Reserves Don Kaisner (one yard on one run) and Mike Wenger (2 yards on 1 attempt) also saw action in backfield.

Crews completed 8 of 13 passes for 51 yards. His top receiver was Huber (three catches for 25 yards). Goslin averaged 13 yards on two catches. Kilgus caught two passes and Steve Metz pulled down one (neither gained yardage on the completions).

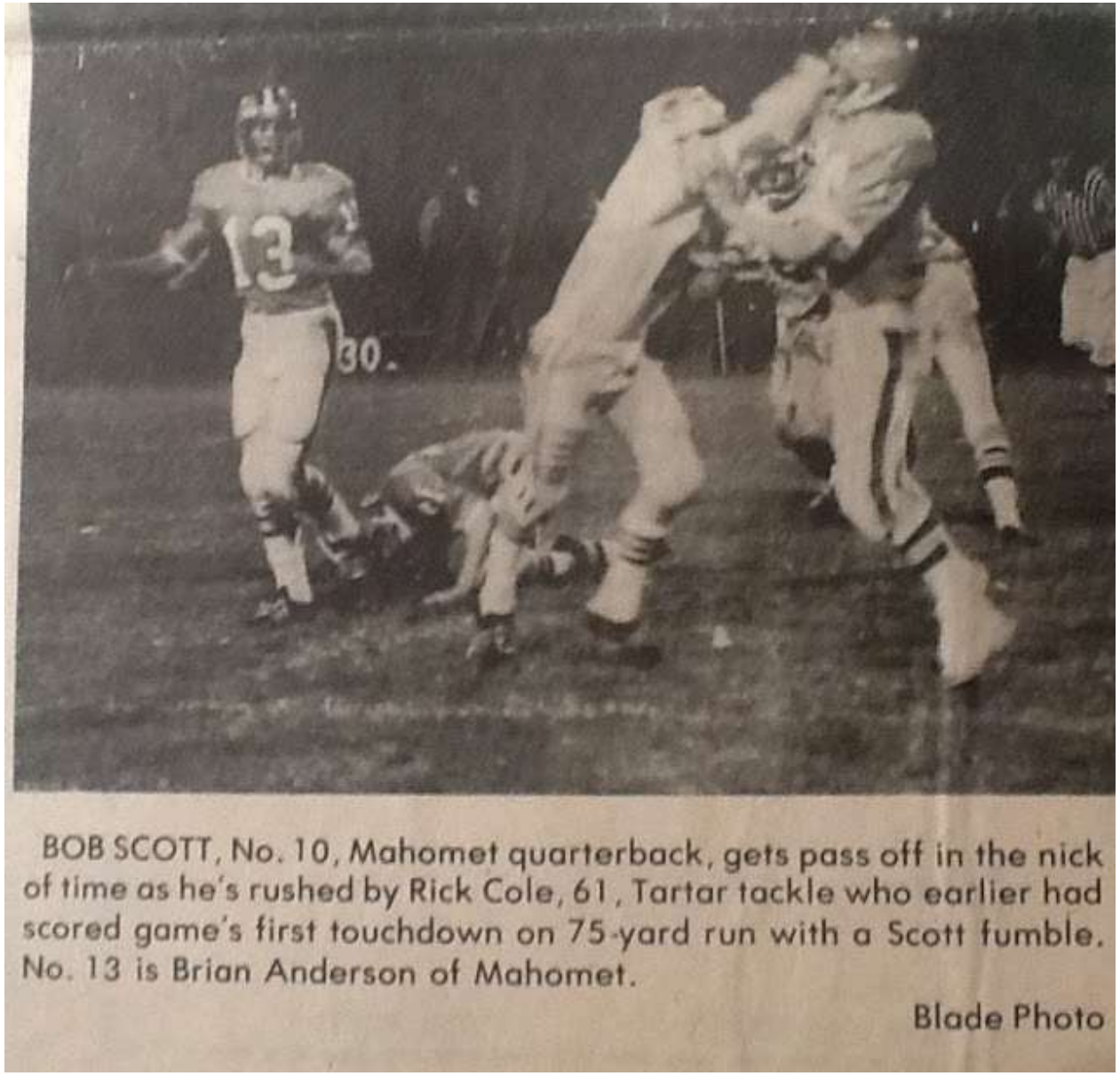
Seven games into the season, the triumvirate of Kilgus, Kelson and Maley were key to the offenses' success. Kilgus had compiled 402 yards on 81 carries and Kelson had pounded out 313 yards on 80 attempts. Although Maley was better known for his blocking ability, he averaged over six yards per attempt with 22 carries for 140 yards.

The air attack was also excellent late in the season with Crews completing exactly 50 percent of his 70 passes for 361 yards. Goslin and Huber were his favorite receivers; Goslin had pulled down 9 passes for 147 yards and Huber caught nine for 113 yards.

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	7	8	0	13	28
Octavia	0	0	0	6	6

Scoring: Fairbury-Cropsey - Touchdowns: Kelson 2 (3 and 4 yard runs);
Maley (5-yard run); Goslin (13-yard pass from Crews). PAT – Doran 2 (Kicks); Friant (pass from Crews).
Octavia - Touchdowns: Warren (13-yard pass from Wilke).



BOB SCOTT, No. 10, Mahomet quarterback, gets pass off in the nick of time as he's rushed by Rick Cole, 61, Tartar tackle who earlier had scored game's first touchdown on 75-yard run with a Scott fumble. No. 13 is Brian Anderson of Mahomet.

Blade Photo

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Fairbury-Cropsey – 18, Mahomet-Seymour – 0

Sangamon Valley Conference Standings Prior to the Mahomet-Seymour Game

	W	L	T	Pct.
Fairbury-Cropsey	5	1	0	.833
Farmer City-Mansfield	5	2	0	.714
Heyworth	4	2	0	.667
Mahomet-Seymour	4	2	0	.667
Leroy	3	2	1	.583
Fischer	3	2	1	.583
Argenta-Oreana	3	3	0	.500
Octavia	0	6	0	.000
Deland-Weldon	0	6	0	.000

Although Fairbury-Cropsey became a full member of the Sangamon Valley Conference just three years earlier, the rivalry between the Tartars and Bulldogs was just as intense as a Bears-Packers or Cubs-Cardinals feud. The stakes were great on this October evening as a Bulldog victory would result in identical 5-2 records and possibly a share of the conference lead (depending on how Farmer City-Mansfield faired). There was good reason to anticipate a fierce battle since Mahomet-Seymour returned 18 lettermen from a 7-2 1972 campaign. Prior to the game, the Tartars' mentor, John Ayers, described Bulldog QB Bob Scott as "an excellent passer, a strong runner, and can even score with field goals." Stopping Scott would be instrumental in stopping Mahomet-Seymour.

The Green and Gold proved its conference leadership was not a fluke by defeating Mahomet-Seymour, 18-0, to guarantee at least a share of the Sangamon Valley Conference title. The victor's offensive starters (Scott Goslin and Randy Friedman, ends; Steve Metz and Tony Aberle, tackles; Rick Cole and Mark Hall, guards; Art Whately, center; Steve Crews, quarterback; Dale Maley, Jeff Kilgus and Mike Kelson, backs) outplayed the losing squad, compiling 216 yards – 53 more than the Bulldogs – and collecting two more first downs (11-9). But the key to victory was the Tartars' punishing defense.

Cole lived every lineman's dream, scoring six points in the opening stanza. Deep in Tartar territory, Bulldog QB Scott attempted a sneak. Hit hard by the Tartar line, the football slipped upward out of Scott's arms and into Coles' hands, the guard grabbed the pigskin as skillfully as a back receiving a pitch from his quarterback and he scooted across the goal line. The PAT kick was blocked, giving FCHS an early 6-0 lead.

Another Tartar defender, junior Goslin, set the table for the second TD. Goslin intercepted a pass at the Fairbury 40 and returned it to the Mahomet 32. Kilgus rushed once for 14 yards and Kelson ran two times for seven yards, advancing the Green and Gold to the eleven. Kelson capped the drive on the next play, running off tackle. A pass attempt on the two-point conversion failed.

The first half ended with the Bulldogs just five yards from a score.

The Tartars kicker, Cole, injured an ankle before intermission. Steve Metz assumed kicking duties at the start of the second half. After returning the opening kick, Mahomet put together a 43 drive that ended on the Tartars' 13.

The Tartars' final score was a 17-yard play, capping a 75-yard drive that covered the end of the third quarter and the opening minutes of the final stanza. Crews and Goslin connected twice for 50 of the yards and Kelson concluded it with a 17-yard TD run. Again, the PAT attempt failed.

The powerful tandem of Kelson and Kilgus combined for 164 yards, the former picked up 82 on 22 attempts and the latter rushed 18 times for 78 yards. Maley was limited to four yards on just three attempts. Reserves Don Kaisner, Mike Wenger and Randy Ricketts rounded out the ground attack. Kaisner picked up two yards on two runs, Wenger gained four yards on one rush and Ricketts netted negative 11 yards on two plays.

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	6	6	0	6	18
Mahomet-Seymour	0	0	0	0	0

Fairbury-Cropsey – 0, Fisher – 12

Sangamon Valley Conference Standings
Prior to Final Game

	W	L	T	Pct.
Fairbury-Cropsey	6	1	0	.833
Farmer City-Mansfield	6	2	0	.750
Leroy	4	2	1	.667
Mahomet-Seymour	4	3	0	.571
Argenta-Oreana	4	3	0	.571
Heyworth	4	3	0	.571
Fischer	3	3	1	.500
Octavia	0	6	0	.000
Deland-Weldon	0	6	0	.000

Although nowhere near the problems injuries created for the Tartars in 1972, the '73 squad also made adjustments as ailments moved athletes in and out of the lineup. Linemen Rick Cole and Alvin Knapp returned to the field against the Fisher Bunnies. Cole suffered an ankle injury a week earlier and Knapp was back after missing a game with an eye injury. Senior Bob Nussbaum was the only Tartar unavailable due to injury in the final contest of the season. The Green and Gold were as healthy as could be expected entering the conclusion of the nine-game campaign.

Assured of ending the season at worst co-champion of the conference (a loss against Fischer would result in a tie with Farmer City-Mansfield for conference title), there was no guarantee of a post-season berth in the inaugural IHSA football playoffs. The only way to guarantee an extended season was to defeat or tie the Bunnies. Unfortunately for the Tartars, Fisher won the contest 12-0. Turnovers hurt Tartars, but dropped passes were an equally big part of the Tartars' 12-0 loss to Fisher.

Fischer was only able to gain 19 yards in the first quarter but came back to total 176 yards in the final three periods while holding the Tartars 28 total yards in the second half. Jeff Kilgus was the bright spot on offense, tallying 93 yards on 16 carries (6.6 yards per carry). Powerful back Mike Kelson was limited to 33 yards on nine attempts. Senior Dale Maley rushed four times for 18 yards and signal caller Steve Crews accumulated 19 yards on five runs.

The Green and Gold managed just thirteen yards in the air. Crews completed three of ten tosses. Kilgus pulled down two for seven yards and Jim Huber's lone catch covered six yards.

On defense, Kenny Hoffman intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble.

The Bunnies' first score was shortly before halftime – Jack Land plunged in from two yards out. The second score was a five-yard run by Bill Motzer, capping a 22-yard third quarter scoring drive.

The disappointing loss dropped the Tartars to 6-2-0 in Sangamon Valley Conference action and created a tie with Farmer City-Mansfield for the league's title. Fisher's conference record improved to 4-3-1, good enough for a fourth place tie with Argenta-Oreana, Heyworth, Leroy and Octavia. Mahomet Seymour claimed second place. Octavia and Deland-Weldon finished league play with 1-7-0 and 0-8-8 records, respectively.

	Fairbury-Cropsey	Fisher
Total Yards	176	234
Rushing:	163	202
Passing:	13	32
Passes Attempted:	13	6
Passes Completed:	3	2
Intercepted By:	1	2
First Downs:	7	14

Scoring by Quarters

	1	2	3	4	T
Fairbury-Cropsey	0	0	0	0	0
Fischer	0	6	0	6	12

Scoring:
Fischer – Touchdowns – Land (1 yd. run); Motzer (5 yd. run).

POST SEASON

Final Sangamon Valley Conference Standings				
	W	L	T	Pct.
Fairbury-Cropsey	6	2	0	.750
Farmer City-Mansfield	6	2	0	.750

Mahomet-Seymour	5	3	0	.626
Argenta-Oreana	4	3	1	.563
Fischer	4	3	1	.563
Heyworth	4	3	1	.563
Fischer	4	3	1	.563
Octavia	1	7	0	.125
Deland-Weldon	0	8	0	.000

IHSA official Jim Flynn said Fairbury-Cropsey would “probably” represent the Sangamon Valley Conference in the playoffs since, even though Fairbury-Cropsey and Farmer City-Mansfield finished with identical conference records, Fairbury-Cropsey beat Farmer City-Mansfield during the season. Unfortunately, inexplicably, the Tartars were snubbed when post-season matchups were announced.

EIGHT VARSITY FOOTBALL Tartars were named to this year's Sangamon Valley Conference All-Star team. Randy Doran (first row, left to right), Mark Hall, Mike Kelson, and Jeff Kilgus join fellow all-stars Tony Aberle (top, left to right), Rick Cole, Rick Rothenberger, and Dale Maley, and Coach John Ayres in looking over the SV conference trophy that the Tartars earned this year. Hall was named to both the offensive and defensive line. Kilgus was named an outstanding offensive and defensive back and Kelson was named as a first team linebacker and received special mention as a running back.

Blade Photo by Dave Roberts

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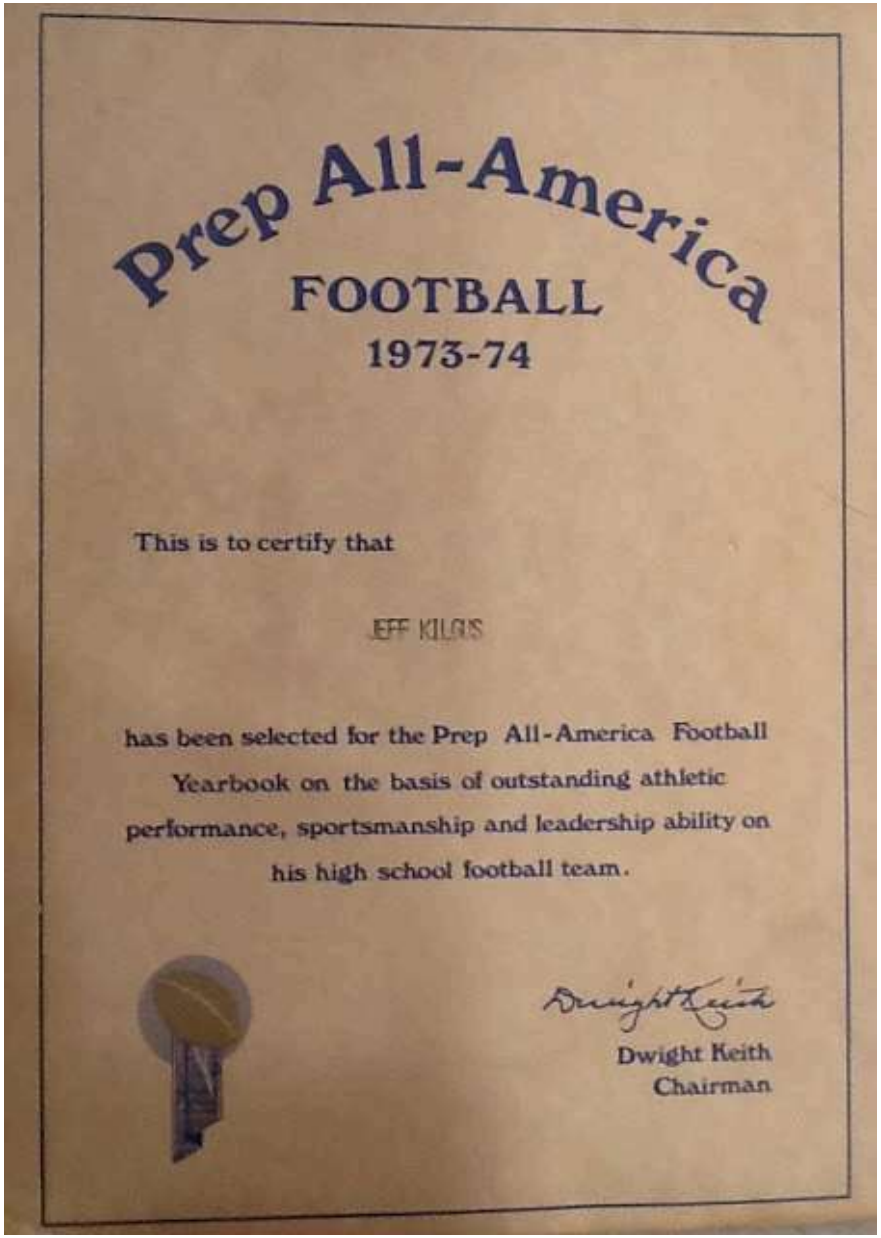
Senior running back and defensive back Jeff Kilgus received Prep All-American honors.

Although greatly disappointed by the IHSA selection committee's decision, The Green and Gold athletes did receive ample post-season recognition. Jeff Kilgus and Mark Hall earned honorable mention on the Chicago Daily News Little All-State Football Team

Fairbury-Cropsey placed eight men on the Sangamon Valley all-star team, with seniors Kilgus and Hall being honored on both the offensive and defensive first teams. Kilgus was the Tartars' leading scorer not so much on the basis of flat-out speed, but rather on agility, quickness, and the knack of hitting defenders harder than they hit him. Hall, in his only year as a lineman, was outstanding on offense and defense, punishing opponents with strength far greater than his size.

The other Tartars drawing first team selection were Rick Rothenberger as an offensive tackle, Tony Aberle as a tackle, and Mike Kelson as a linebacker. Also receiving all-star honors were Kelson (special mention offensive back, Rick Cole (special mention defensive back.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This is to certify that
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Tartar Co-Captain Mark Hall was named first team all-conference on offense and defense.

Dale Maley (honorable mention running back) and Randy Doran (honorable mention kicker)

The 1973 Tartars dominated opponents on offense and defense. FCHS scored 151 points (16.8 ppg) while limiting the opposition to 82 (9.1 ppg). The ferocity and athleticism of the Green and Gold's players was evident when comparing fumbles; the Tartars fumbled just 13 times (losing 8) while opponents fumbled 25 times (losing 18). Opponents held a slight edge in first downs (88-84) and assessed penalty yards were almost identical (FCHS - 550, Opponents – 554).

Kelson and Kilgus accounted for over half of the Tartars' points. Kelson tallied 82 points and Kilgus contributed 78. Randy Doran added seven points with kicks and another 6 on a TD. Scott Goslin's two TD catches equaled 12 points. Receiver Jim Huber registered 10 points. Dale Maley, Randy Ricketts, Randy Friedman, Hall, and Rick Cole each contributed six points. Steve Crews carried the ball in twice for two-point conversions, earning him four points. Don Kaisner rounded out the scoring with one two-point conversion.

FCHS rushed for 1,357 yards on 354 carries. The offense relied heavily on three talented running backs. Kilgus paced the team with 559 yards on 111 carries (5.1 average). Junior Kelson tallied 432 yards on 110 attempts (3.9 average). Although he did not carry the ball as often as his teammates, senior Maley totaled 261 yards on 30 tries, averaging 5.4 yards per carry. Junior quarterback Crews showed versatility, amassing 92 yard on 61 carries. Reserve back Kaisner showed great promise for the '74 campaign, gaining 58 yards on 23 attempts. Ricketts rushed 26 yards on 7 carries and Mike Wenger gained 17 on 6 runs.

Doran and Dave Roth each ran three times, gaining 10 and two yards respectively.

Crews was excellent at distributing passes to a variety of receivers. He completed 42 of this 89 passes for 415 yards (9.9 yards per completion). Scott Goslin was the sturdy signal caller's favorite receiver, pulling down 12 passes for 169 yards and two touchdowns. Senior end Huber was close behind with 119 yards on ten catches. Huber scored one TD and also caught a pass for a 2-point PAT. Friedman gained 60 yards on five receptions, scoring one TD and pulling down a pass for a 2-point PAT. Kilgus was the top receiver out of the backfield, hauling in 9 passes for 41 yards, a touchdown and one 2-point PAT. Roth completed his only pass for a three-yard gain. Maley and Joe Oprondek each caught two passes for 13 yards. Kaisner pulled down two throws for three yards, one resulting in a two-point conversion. Steve Metz caught one pass for no gain.

Cole and Metz handled kickoffs. Cole booted the ball 24 times for 1,108 yards. Opponents returned his kicks 290 yards (net 34.1 yards). His backup kicked off six times for 158 yards. Opponent returned his kicks 38 yards (net 20 yards).

Friedman was responsible for virtually all of the team's punts, punting 36 times for 1,101 yards. Although he averaged 30.1 yards per kick, opponents' returns averaged just 0.1 yards! Tim Davis punted three times (two of them quick kicks) for 62 yard

Posted 8th February 2016 by Remember The Tartars

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